

*Extracts from Demi-Official Reports.—By Capt. ARTHUR CONOLLY
on a Mission into Khorasan, (communicated to the Editor from the
Political Secretariat.)*

The Huzarah and Eimauk Country which we traversed between Bameean and Meimunna, consists of high unwooded mountains, covered with grass and various shrubs and herbs which serve for spring and summer pasture, and winter fodder, and vallies at different elevations, in the highest of which is grown only the naked Thibetan barley, and in the lowest barley, wheat, and millet.

The Huzarah portion is the coldest and poorest, and the natives with difficulty eke out a living from its natural resources ; living in small villages of low huts where they herd during the long winter season under one roof with their cows and sheep, and using as fuel small dry shrubs and the dung of their cattle. An idea of their privations may be formed from the fact that the most of the people do not use *salt*. There is none in their own country, and as they cannot afford the price which would remunerate importers of this heavy article from Tartary and Afghanistan, they have learned to do without it. Their best bread is consequently very tasteless to a stranger.

But the Huzarahs are not allowed to enjoy even their limited means of existence in peace, for the Oosbegs make occasional inroads upon their dwelling places, and sweep away whole villages into slavery, leaving fertile spots desolate. Their neighbours, but religious enemies, the Eimauks, also carry off as many of them as they can, from time to time, conquer or kidnap, and the chiefs of their own race, steal each other's subjects in their petty wars, exporting all they can thus obtain, through Toorkish merchants with whom they have understanding.

We found the Huzarah people unblushing beggars and thieves, but they are mild mannered and industrious, and sigh for the protection of a settled government. Were this given to them, their condition would soon improve in every way. Their chiefs are 'barbarians of the rudest stamp, without any of the barbarous virtues.' They reside in small mud forts, exact as much as they can from all who come within their reach, and form occasional combinations for the defence or attack of each other. The Eimauks differ chiefly from the Huzarahs in being of a more nomade habit, the chiefs consult their dignity and safety, by dwelling in mud forts, but the people reside nearly the whole year in the dry stick and felt tents which are used by the Toorkmans. The chiefs, like

the Huzarah meers, have their feuds, which continually break them up into parties against each other. The people are bolder than the long oppressed Huzarabs, and will get together to attack travellers whom they would rather only attempt to rob privately.

The Soldiers of both tribes are cavalry, mounted chiefly on small active horses of native breed, though some ride horses imported from Toorkistan. Their arms are swords, and matchlocks, the last weapon furnished with a prong for a rest. There are clans of military repute among both people. Their strength lies in the poorness and natural difficulty of their country, but the last defence is I imagine greatly overrated. Parts of the interior are described as much more steep than that which we traversed, but this portion, which is the most important, as being on the high road to Herat, is by no means so inaccessible as it has been represented.

Neither among Huzarabs or Eimaüks is money current, and sheep form the prime standard of barter with the traders who come among them from Afghanistan, and Tartary. These Merchants establish a friendly understanding with chiefs of different districts, to whose forts they repair and open shop, giving their hosts $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards of Kerbus, or coarse narrow cotton cloth, for the value of each sheep received in barter; and being furnished till their bargains are concluded, with straw for their beasts, and generally bread for themselves and their people. Traders from Herat, Candahar and Cabul bring their checked turbans, coarse cotton cloths and chintzes, tobacco, felt, and carpet dyes, iron spades, and plough ends, molasses and a few raisins. Toorkish Merchants bring similar articles from their own country, with a little rice, cotton, and salt, occasionally horses, which they prefer to exchange for slaves.

The articles which the Huzarabs and Eimaüks bring to market, are men and women, small black oxen, cows, and sheep, clarified butter, some woven wollens for clothing, grain sacks and carpet bags, felts for horse clothing, and patterned carpets, all made from the produce of their flocks, for they export no raw wool. They also furnish lead and sulphur, and the Eimaüks especially speak of copper and silver mines as existing in their mountains, but they do not work them.

Agha Hoossein, a Native of Herat, who had long traded among the the Huzarah, and Eimaük clans, occupying our route between Bameean and the border of Meimunna, negotiated our passage with a safe guard the whole way for 1,200 Rupees, and we marched with him from Bameean on the 23rd September 1840, escorted by 80 Huzarabs under a son of Meer Sadik Beg, a leading chief in the district of Deb Nangre. Our road

took us in 3 marches over spurs from the main ridge of Hindoo Koosh (Koh-I-Baba) to the fertile and well inhabited valley of Yaikobung, which has the breadth of from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, in a length of 15 miles, and is well watered by a clear trout stream from the famed 'Bendimir,' which flows on to Bulkh.

We slept the first night in the cold damp valley of Shebbertoo, which, according to the boiling point of a Thermometer, is about 10,500 feet above the level of the sea. The mercury at sunset stood at 37° ; in the course of the next $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour it fell to freezing point, in fact before sun rise next morning it was down at 10° . The residents say that they have 5 months winter, which commences late, but is every rigorous, and the deep snow which falls, is not all off the ground two months after the vernal equinox. The rest of the march brought us to the valley of Fuor Behar, about 2,100 feet lower than Shebbertoo, where the barley crop was not all ripe, and the Thermometer showed about 11 degrees difference of temperature. The third took us 8 miles down the valley of Yaikobung, 1,100 feet still lower, where the people had just got in their crops of fine wheat.

The present chief of Yaikobung is Meer Mohib, a vulgar and coarse man. He put Shah Shoojah's letter to his head, and came to pay his respects to us as the bearers of it, when we gave him a suitable present. Having taken leave, he sent to beg for my furred cloak, and on my giving his messenger a note which would procure him one from Bameean, he sent to say that he must have my girdle shawl and 1,000 rupees, and he would permit us to depart. We were too many to be thus bullied here, therefore replying that the Meer seemed to 'misunderstand our condition, we marched away at once without his daring to interrupt us.

West of Yaikobung, the main ridge of Hindoo Koosh sweeps round to the northward, after which turning westward again, it forms the northern boundary of the hills which slope down to the right side of the Heriroad valley. Our fourth march took us by a very steep defile across this ridge, from the base of which we descended through a deep valley, about 5 miles westward, to the fountain head of the Heriroad a clear pool of gently bubbling springs, where the boiling point shewed an elevation of 9,500 feet, 1,100 higher than the bed of the stream flowing northward from Yaikobung.

We followed the course of the Herat river, in its clear, quick wanderings through different breaks of the limestone valley, which forms its bed, for four marches, the first taking us to the head quarters of Meer Sadik Beg in Dab Yungee. This chief, who is a vulgar but well

disposed man, treated us very hospitably, neither he or his sons read the Shah's letter, but having heard it perused, he stuck it in the top of his turban, and declared that he was His Majesty's servant to do any thing that lay within his limited ability. We remarked that the chief service His Majesty required from the Huzarah Meer was to keep their people loyally quiet, to which Sadik Beg replied, that he should be truly glad to be quiet, both on the king's and his own account, if some of his Huzarah neighbours and Eimauks, would only let him.

We expected to have found awaiting us near this post the Eimauk escort which our guide had engaged from Mahomed Areem Beg, the Atalik of the Ferozkohee clan; but we found that in the interim the Atalik had been persuaded to march with an Eimauk Army against Hussun Sirdar, a powerful chief of the Dah Koondie Huzarahs, and that we must in prudence await instructions from him, or an end of the war. This Sadik Beg said would not last long, as the Eimauks had gone in such numbers, that they would not keep the field for the want of provisions, and the danger he most feared for us, was, our meeting some of these returning troops ere we got the Ataliks safeguard. Our guide therefore went off to the head quarters of the latter chief and finding there one of his sons, persuaded him to come to our camp. The young Eimauk chief arrived at night, and nothing would induce him to go beyond my Meerzas tent.

The Huzarahs, he said, were his sworn enemies, and were capable of any atrocity, why should he put himself within their reach in the dark. Next morning he went up to the fact on Sadik Beg sending him a solemn oath of friendship, and they presently came in a cordial manner together to consult with us about the onward march. The son of the Atalik said that he would give an answer in his father's name to any Eimauks who might come across our road, and as he appeared to be an unvapouring person, he resolved to proceed with him at once. Sadik Beg accompanied us one march with a large body of horse, as he had heard that a party of Huzarahs, from another near Chiefship, had marched to intercept us, turning back at the end of his district, between which and the Eimauk border a few miles of the valley are left waste. Our reported enemy, the Chief of Sal, met us here with 100 horse, and said that he had ridden to our assistance, on the intelligence that Hussan Khan of the Tymunnee Eimauks had occupied the road ahead, with the intention of plundering us. We understood this to be a demand for a present, so adding to our thanks a Cashmere

shawl, we marched on, receiving from our way side acquaintance a parting caution to put no trust in any Eimauk.

We safely concluded this day's march of 12 miles, which brought us among a quite different people. In point of personal appearance the advantage was certainly on the side of the Eimauks, who though living closely after the nomade fashion of Toorkmans and Oosbeks, have the features rather of Darians than Tartars. The Feroorcokehs indeed claim descent from a Colony, which was exported from Feroorkoh, in the Persian province of Mazenderan. We encamped upon the right bank of the Henrood, among people of this clan, half a mile off on the other side of the river was the fort of Dowlut Yar, surrounded by villages of Tymunnee tents, to which we learned that Hussan Khan had returned the day before, apparently without having entertained any idea of barring our road.

The war, we learned, was ended. It had its origin in an act of violence committed 9 years before upon the very Agha Hossein attending us as guide, then travelling with a stock of goods from Herat to Cabool, who was plundered by the former chief of Dowlut Yar, for preferring the quarters of our host the Ferozkohee Atalik. The latter Chief not being able with his domestic means to force a restitution of the goods taken from his protégé, allowed Agha Hossein to call upon his Huzarah friends for succour, and the leading chief of Deh Koondee, Hussan Sirdar, glad to indulge a national dislike while defending a commercial privilege which it concerned every Chief, whether Eimauk or Huzarah, to uphold, came with such a large force that he took the lead in the operations against Dowlut Yar, having captured and utterly rased the fort; after killing its Chief and his eldest son, he gave the old man's, wife to his own brother, and took his daughter to himself, returning home only, when he had captured another fort nearer the border, and placed a party of his own men therein. Agha Hossein got all his goods that could be recovered, and so retired. But now the Atulik regretted the loss of Eimauk reputation to which he had been accessory, so he countenanced a stratagem by which the border fort was recaptured, and having helped to rebuild that of Dowlut Yar, brought back the old chief's second son, the present Hussan Khan, to inherit it. The latter had just before our coming persuaded most of the Eimauk Chiefs, including his father's first adversary the Atalik, to make an attack upon Hussan Sirdar of Deh Koondee, for the cleansing of their national reputation. The quarrel was accommodated in a way to make the Eimauks appear superior, by the

Deh Koondee Sirdar's restoring the arms which he had taken from Hussan Khan's father and engaging to give 2 or 3 daughters to the heir and his relatives, to close the blood account.

Agha Hossein our guide, who thought it well to remove all ill blood from Hussan Khan's heart for the excusable share that he had in the past disasters, went to Dowlut Yar, with a koran, on which he declared before witnesses that he absolved the chief from all obligations to repair his former losses, and called upon him to say in the same solemn way that by-gones should be by-gones. The Chief consented, and accepted a present which we sent with a letter to his address from Shah Shoojah, but his manner on both occasions was so sullen that our guide resolved to give him the least possible opportunity of doing us an injury.

The Atalik arrived in our camp next morning, and speaking with confidence about our road forward, sent us on with a small escort under his brother and son, while he went to get back from Hussan Khan a horse stolen from our pickets which had been traced to Dowlut Yar. When we had got 2 miles down the valley we were met by 60 horsemen, who called out to us to stop and pay zucat. The Atalik's brother riding a head, and explaining that we were envoys on the King's affairs, and not traders, our waylayer replied that we had paid our way to others, and why not to him. 'They are guests of the Atalik' exclaimed his brother, 'and by God and the Prophet they shall not give a needle or a Chillum of tobacco.' 'Then by God and the Prophet we will take it', rejoined the robber; whereupon he ranged some of his men in line to face us and caused others to dismount upon a rock behind and to set their guns in rest. We lost no time in getting ready for defence, but the Atalik's brother riding out between our fronts, called a parley, and drew a line which neither party was to pass till peace or war had been decided on. Three quarters of an hour was consumed in debate, which was thrice broken by demonstration of attack and by the end of this time 30 or 40 men of the same tribe had collected on foot from a rear encampment, with the evident intention of making a rush at our baggage in the event of our becoming engaged in front. We had despatched several messengers to bring up our host, and just at the affair had assumed its worst look, a cry was raised that he was coming. Looking back, we could see horsemen pouring out like bees, from the tents surrounding Dowlut Yar, and all hastening in our direction, but while our Eimauk escort exclaimed that the Atalik was coming in force to the rescue, our opponents cried out in scorn that Hussan Khan was coming to help them to plunder us, and each party,

raised a shout for the supposed reinforcement. After about 10 minutes of the most intense anxiety during which we and our opponents, as if by mutual agreement, waited to see whose conjecture was right, we were relieved by the arrival of the Atalik, who galloping up ahead to us at the utmost speed, exclaimed that he had brought Hussan Khan to our defence. The announced ally was not long in following with 300 men, and our enemies were made to understand that they must abandon all idea of attacking us. Hussan Khan declaring that we were envoy's recommended to him by the Shah whose slave he was, and that he would allow no one to molest us. It seemed pretty clear that the Atalik had wrought this loyal zeal in Hussan Khan's mind, and probably, from the delay which had occurred, that he had not found the task easy; but 'twas not a time to scrutinize very particularly the motives which had brought us a defender, so we gave Hussan Khan the politest credit for his professions, and at evening sent him a handsome shawl from the Atalik's fort, with a promise that we would not fail to represent his conduct to the Shah.

We arrived that evening without further adventure, at Badgah in Cheghehezan, a fort in the Herirood valley which is the family seat of the Feroozkohee Atalik, and we shewed our appreciation of the service which this chief had rendered us by giving a very handsome present to him, besides gifts according to their degrees to his brother and other relations.

We were detained 4 days at Badgah, first in consequence of the Atalik's indisposition, and then in order to get rid of a neighbouring chief connected with him, Kurar Beg of Surusghar, who threatened to attack us in our very camp near the Atalik's fort unless we paid him black mail, his right to demand this, he said, lying simply in his power to enforce its payment. After causing us several alarms, Kurar Beg listened to the remonstrances of the Atalik, the aid of our host being necessary to protect him from another more powerful chief whose son he had murdered in his own house, and he came to pay us a visit, attended by 200 followers.

We now left the Herirood valley, ascending 3 miles through the hills on its northern side to a ridge running parallel with it, and proceeding 8 miles further to the northward over an undulating down to the summit of the main ridge of Hindoo Koosh, which we crossed by the easy pass of Shategh i Ghilmee. It is not higher to the eye than the ridge first noted, and there are higher looking masses to the northward, but our guides said that it rose again both east and westward, and their defini-

tion need not be disputed, for the springs on one side of this trunk flow to the Herirood, and on the other towards Tartary. We descended from it to a deep and rapid brook called the Tungan; which led us 4 miles down with the cultivated valley of Ghilmee to the mouth of a deep and close pass called the Derah i Khurgoosh, or the Hare's defile, where the boiling point shewed an elevation of 5,200 feet, about 400 feet lower than our last station in the valley of the Herirood.

Friday 9th October. Quitting camp at 9, 15, we followed the brook Tungan into the Hare's defile, commanding the road at the second of 3 angles. In the first 500 yards, was a brick wall with holes built up like a screen upon a not easily attainable portion of the rock, which we were told was anciently erected to help the collection of transit duty. We next went $13\frac{1}{4}$ miles between bare perpendicular mountains of limestone, the defile running in acute zigzags which for the most part were not more than 50 or 60 yards long, and having but breadth enough for a path, and for the brook which we were continually obliged to cross. Burnes, I see, states that after crossing the Dundan Shikan, he travelled on northward to Khoollum between frequently precipitous rocks which rose on either side to the height of 300 feet and obscured all stars at night, except those of the zenith. I am afraid of exaggerating the height of the cliffs between which our road here lay by guessing at their height in feet, so will only say that their precipitous elevation made our horsemen look like pigmies as they filed along their bases in the bed. After this very narrow portion, the defile widened to the breadth of 50 yards, but it presently contracted again to that of thirty, which may be stated as the average width of its onward windings for nearly 5 miles, where the Tungan discharged itself into the river Moorghaub, which came from the east, in a bed of good width, through a similar deep pass. After creeping along the bottom of the defile for the first $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours of our march, we ascended some way up the side of the left mountain, and followed the bends for the next hour and a quarter by a narrow path worn upon its slightly sloping edge, a tangled thicket now occupying all the spare bed of the stream, to which we descended again $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before its junction with the Moorghaub. The Tungan is a deep brook before its entrance into the Hare's defile. In spring, what with the increase of its waters from melted snow, and and their compression between the sharp turnings of the narrow defile, there is no passage from side to side, except such as is afforded for a footman by means of a spear laid across its rocky banks. The distances noted afford a very imperfect description of the quantity of ground that must

be traversed by a traveller through this defile. An idea of its windings may be formed from the facts, that our baggage ponies were nearly 4 hours creeping along a distance for which my observations afford a direct line of $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and that the portion of our road which lay in the bed, crossed the stream 34 times.

What is called the Derah i Khurgoosh ends at the junction of the Tungan with the Moorghaub, but the narrowness and difficulty of the pass continues for a mile farther down the left bank of the latter stream, which we forded where the water was up to our ponies' shoulders, running at the rate of, I should imagine, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour. A steep road, which laden ponies take, ascended a little above the entrance of Derah i Khurgoosh, which comes down again just below the junction of the two streams.

Afterward the pass opens out into a warm little valley of 250 yards width, called Taitak, or under the mountain, at the end of which we halted near some Eimauk tents. Hence we turned off northerly from the Moorghaub, and ascending by a moderate steep pass to the top of the hills enclosing its right side, proceeded on a gentle rise over an undulating surface that gained to a small grassy vale lying at the foot of a higher pass. Here we had an unpleasant scene with the greedy relatives of the Atalik accompanying us, who announcing their intention to take leave, demanded presents extravagantly above any claims that they could prefer for reward, and by their united clamour hindered all endeavours to moderate their claims made by our host, to whom alone were we strictly bound to give any thing. After I had gone out of the way to satisfy these beggars, they went off as if they were the party robbed, and I have no doubt that they incited the attack which was made upon us the next day.

October 11th. Quitting camp at 10, we ascended $\frac{1}{4}$ mile up a rocky pass to the spring head of Misree, which waters a small grassy level in the enclosure of the pass where we found an Eimauk encampment. The pass upward from this little platform was steepish, though on an equal ascent, and the path was tiring, lying over small loose fragments of slaty limestone which had fallen from the shelving bases of the decomposed cliffs on each side. The defile above the spring gradually narrowed in an ascent of about $13\frac{1}{4}$ miles, which our laden ponies were 40 minutes accomplishing, to a point at which the steep rocks, enclosing it almost met, leaving a short passage through which 3 horsemen could ride abreast. Our foremost riders had nearly reached this point when a number of armed men rising with shouts from their ambuscade above it and on either side

of us, began with one accord to pelt stones at us and to fire their guns, those who were on our flanks also loosening pieces of rock which came bounding down the shingle bank with force enough to bear away any thing occupying the path. Fortunately the cafila was far enough behind to avoid the first of the attack, and we retreated to an open part of the pass, where, making ourselves masters of the shelving bank on each side, we entered into negotiation with our assailants ahead. After much time had been lost in parley, our aggressors agreed to take a few pieces of chintz and 40 rupees (as we had no more goods) and invited us to advance, but we had scarcely reached the old point, when our envoy sent with the cloths and cash agreed to, came running down to us stripped and beaten; and the attack upon us was renewed. Our skirmishers having kept the shelving flanks, we had not to retreat far, and having briefly consulted on turning again, we decided that there was nothing for it but to force our way, so advancing with our best musquet men on foot, while those left with the cafila followed in close order, firing over our heads at the cliffs above, we in less than 10 minutes made ourselves masters of the narrow passage, from which our enemies retreated over the hills. Some of our men and horses were severely bruised by the stones which were raised upon us during this push, but 20 boxes were broken, and the only gun shot wound that could be found was in the cloak of one of my Hindoostanee servants. I am happy to believe that none of our cowardly enemies were killed or seriously wounded, for we found no dead men on the rocks taken, and they retreated too fast to carry off any who were much disabled.

We were 40 minutes more ascending to the summit of the pass, but the defile was comparatively open above the narrow passage, the rocks on each side being low and rounded. We here took leave of the Atalik who had come after us on hearing that we were attacked. I believe him to be about the best man in his country.

We rested at evening in the small valley of Hushtumee, where we found officers collecting the tax of one sheep in forty for the Walee of Meimunna. Our next two marches were over the mountains of the Hindoo Koosh, from which we made a steep descent, leaving the mouth of the defile by which they are entered nearly 6 miles S. E. of Meimunna, to which we proceeded through a fertile valley bounded by low and round earthy hills, the stream which we had followed from the foot of the mountains irrigating countless vineyards and gardens, the walls and trees of which concealed the town till we were inside it.

Somes miles before reaching Meimunna we observed a sign that we were approaching a slave mart, for an old man who rode out from a small encampment to offer his horse to us for sale, said that he would take a young male slave and a pony for it. We told him that we were not men sellers, and asked him if he was not ashamed to deal in the Khulk'Oollah. (God's Creatures.) He replied that he could only do as every body round him did, but that he did not require the actual slave, only the value of one, shewing that men are here a standard of barter as sheep are among the Huzarahs. Herattees, this old broker said, were comparatively speaking a drug in the market, owing to the quantity that the vuzeer of that city had exported. Huzarahs were so so, and the only captives that would now fetch a good price, were the young men and girls of Roum and (*illeg. in MS.*) or other real Kuzzilbashees.

Mirrab Khan was out upon his annual battu when we arrived, but his brother gave us excellent lodging, where our people and horses were daily provided with every thing that could be desired. The Walee returned on the 4th day of our detention, and courteously visited us the next morning, when after presenting to him Shah Shoojah's letter and a dress of honor, I quite won his heart by giving him a double barrelled percussion gun, he being passionately addicted to field sports. We went the next day to return his visit, and the following is my note of the interview.

Mirrab Khan bade us frankly welcome, and ordered in breakfast of bread, fruit and salted cream tea, of which we partook together, our servants carrying off parcels of fine green tea imported from Yarkund, and large loaves of Russian refined sugar, which were set before us upon large platters of dried fruits, as the host's offering.

I could not obtain certain accounts of Mirrab Khan's revenue, for he keeps no regular dufter. My Meerza witnessed this irregularity for years, and used to remonstrate with Mirrab Khan about it, when the chief would reply that it was not the Oosbeg way to take particular account of what came and went, a saying confirmed by report of the laxity, which prevails in the financial department of Khiva, and even in that of the more formally organized government of Bokhara. Mirrab Khan expected to be furnished with means for all his expenses by his Dewan Beggee, who was able to do this without murmuring, after getting in half of the Walee's due from the inferior officers, through whose hands it came. I have roughly calculated the Walee's annual expenses at 10,000 tillas, or 80,000 Caubul rupees, which supposing my preceding conjecture right, would give him a fair revenue of a lakh, and a half of

rupees, but this might be increased very greatly, if any thing like system were introduced into his government. It is said at Meimunna that Ahmud Shah imposed a tax of one toman upon each of 360 ploughs, belonging to as many villages in this district, then registered under *Aumilders*, for the support of Hajee Khan's *Mehman Khanah*. Those ploughs were understood to be used for the cultivation of lands watered by natural streams, (there are no *kuhreezes* in this country), and something more than 3 times their produce was said to be raised from *Daimee* land or soil watered by the heavens. If we allow 15 *khurwars* for the crop of one plough, we have 5,400 *khurwars* for the stream lands; 3 times this for the rain crops would be 17,200 *khurwars* and the total 22,600 Ditto. The country is certainly now better populated and cultivated than it was at the beginning of the *Dooranee* monarchy, so a guess may be made at the least amount of its agricultural produce, but I cannot pretend to determine this. Much again is exported from this province to the *Eimauks* and *Huzarahs*, and, latterly, to *Herat*. In cheap times a *khurwar*, or 100 *muns*, of wheat is sold for a *ducat*; we only get a third of this quantity for the same money.

We made 5 marches to the southward of west, viâ *Alma*, *Keisu* and *Charshumbel* from Meimunna to the rise of the *Moorghaub* encamping on its bank at the fort of *Karoul Khaneh's* a few miles below the fort of *Bala Moorghaub* which we did not see. In view upon our left during these 5 marches was the northermost ridge of the *Hindoo Koosh* mountains from which we descended behind Meimunna. Our road lay upon easy rises and falls through hills of a light clayey soil, enclosing many well watered vallies and glens, in which is cultivated wheat, barley, millet, sesame, flax and cotton; vineyards and gardens flourish about the villages at the chief of which brisk little fairs are held twice a week for the convenience of the country round. It is a fruitful country which only requires more inhabitants, and I learn that the districts on towards *Herat*, as well as those under the mountains eastward of Meimunna, are of similar character.

We found our road to *Karoul Khazeh* safe, but vigilantly watched by patrolling parties detached by the *Walee* of Meimunna, the *Jemsheedee* tribe, and the *Soonnee Huzarahs* of *Killah*. Several *cofilas* passed us, going to *Bokhara* with merchandize, or to Meimunna for grain, and we met single *Toorkmauns* riding horses to Meimunna which they designed to exchange there for slaves. On the 4th March, when we had passed the ruined fort of *Kaornach*, anciently the *Jemsheedee* border mark, we were met by a young chief of the latter tribe, who thinking that our influence might avail him at *Herat*, complained that he had been driven

from his home by Mahommud Zeman Khan, his more powerful rival of the same clan, who on sending a party of those who had followed him, to cultivate land near Nerochok had fairly seized their crops, driven off their cattle and sold 25 persons to the Toorkmauns. This confirmed the statement which we had heard at Meimunna, and which we soon ceased to doubt that the Soonnee religion is no longer a safeguard against captivity. Every defenceless person who can be used for labor is carried off to the insatiable markets of Tartary. We were followed by a small cafila of slaves from Meimunna consisting of Sheah Huzarabs and Soonnee Eimauks, of all ages from 5 to 30.

We forded the Moorghaub at Karoul Khaneh, and our onward march lay along or near its left bank for 8 marches to Merve. The first took us past the rather imposing, but desolate mud fort and citadel of Merochak. Many mud pillars, which were formerly used by watchers of crops, yet stand among the weedy bushes that have overrun the chief portion of this now deserted valley, and the land retains many traces of the industry with which it used to be irrigated. In parts high weeds have sprung up thickly where flood water from the Moorghaub has been allowed to settle, and its stagnation in those marshes is doubtless the chief cause of the malaria which makes this district uninhabitable during the heat of summer. The next wide break of the Moorghaub valley below a broad belt of low dry hills which bound Merochak, forms the head of the division called Punjdeh extending 20 miles down to a point where the stream of Kooshk joins the Moorghaub, which although it contains weedy vegetation in standing water on one side, is well inhabited by Toorkmauns, who are evidently in a flourishing condition. They breed many horses which they profitably export; and they find pasture for large flocks of sheep, and herds of camels in their range of the valley parts of which they cultivate with jewaree wheat and barley.

These Toorkmauns are a colony of the Ersaree tribe from the banks of the Oxus, divided into 4 clans, called Oolle Zuppeh, Kureh Shughsee, and Chunghee which they estimate in round numbers at 500 tents each.

At Punjdeh we laid in 5 days' dry provisions for ourselves and horses, there being no encampments upon our road or along the Moorghaub to Yellatoon. The right of the valley, which the river favors, is for nearly all through bounded by a well defined line of low hills. The left, near which our road lay, was sided by hillocks and undulations than positive hills. On the 2d March we first observed sand lying upon the hill as if drifted by northerly winds from the desert, and a third of our onward way lay, over loose beds of sand that covered portions of the hard white clay soil,

which forms the proper surface of the country as far as Merve. The bank of the Moorghaub upon which we halted each night, was thickly fringed with Tamarisk bushes. The water of the river was very muddy, flowing ly with eddies at the rate of one and a quarter mile per hour, and having many dangerous quicksands. We very nearly lost a man who rode his horses a little way in to drink. Though we met no tents we saw vast flocks of sheep which are sent thus far from Merve to pasture with a few shepherds and dogs. We carried chopped straw upon our horses, being accustomed to it, but there was no want of grass on the way for the native horses of our fellow travellers who had not gone to this expense. The road is by no means difficult abounding as it does in grass, wood and water, and it was evidently well travelled formerly.

Our third march brought us to a very fine caravansary of burned bricks, containing accommodation for many men and beasts, which is attributed to Abdoolah Khan of Bokhara a philanthropist who has the credit of all good works in these countries, as Alle Merdun Khan does in Affghanistan. Close to it is a mausoleum sacred to the memory of some Imaum forgotten.

Despatch from Lieut. H. Bigge, Assistant Agent, detached to the Naga Hills, to Capt. Jenkins, Agent Governor General, N.E. Frontier, communicated from the Political Secretariat of India to the Secretary to the Asiatic Society.

I have the honor to report my arrival at this Post, (Demalpore) where I am happy to state large supplies of grain, &c. &c., are now daily arriving for the use of the troops about to accompany me to the Naga hills.

Having been prevented, from the total want of population on the road between Rangalao Ghur and Kasirangah, of Mehal Morung, from passing up that line of country, I crossed to the north bank of the Burrampooter at Bishnath, and passing through the villages of Baghmaree, Rangsalli, Goopore, and Kolah Barri in the Luckimpore district, crossed the Maguli Island to Dehingeahgong, and so through Deergong to Cacharri Hath, where I fell in with the detachment of the Assam Lt. Inf. which Captain Hannay had sent off, to await my orders at Nogorah.

From Cacharri Hath I passed to the Dhunseri river at Golah ghaut, where I was glad to find that the greatest portion of the supplies of rice, &c. dispatched by me from Nogong, had all arrived safely, and